



CLEAN WATER ACTION

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Written Testimony of Sarah Uhl, Environmental Health Coordinator

On behalf of Clean Water Action

Before the Connecticut General Assembly's Select Committee on Children, March 2, 2010

Testimony in Support of HB 5314 "AAC Child Safe Products and Banning Cadmium in Children's Products"

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments in support of House Bill 5314. My name is Sarah Uhl, and I am the Environmental Health Coordinator for Clean Water Action in Connecticut. Clean Water Action is a non-profit organization with one million members nationwide and over 20,000 members in Connecticut. Our Hartford-based staff works with local groups and citizen leaders around the state on issues affecting our health, environment, and quality of life.

Clean Water Action sincerely appreciates the Select Committee on Children's attention to the problem of toxic chemicals in children's products. Thanks to your efforts, Connecticut has received national recognition for passing health-protective chemical policies such as the lead and asbestos phase-outs that originated in this committee in 2008. Unfortunately, lead and asbestos are two of many dozens of chemicals of high concern that are currently allowed and being used in products for young children. For some other examples, please see Washington State's list of 66 high priority chemicals on which children's manufacturers will soon be required to disclose usage information: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/cspa/pdf/ChemicalReportingList.pdf> The chemicals used in children's products and other consumer products often migrate out into house dust, rub off onto hands, leach into saliva when being sucked on, or otherwise end up in the home environment. And because of these exposure pathways, many hundreds of synthetic, hazardous chemicals are now found in children's bodies and linked with a wide range of chronic diseases and disorders that are on the rise (for more information on the problem, please see <http://healthreport.saferchemicals.org/>).

House Bill 5314 would set us on a path toward a more comprehensive solution by requiring the Department of Consumer Protection to create a short list of priority chemicals of high concern that would be slowly phased out of consumer products meant primarily for use by children. The bill would make Connecticut one of four states that are implementing this type of modernized chemicals policy (the others being Maine, Washington, and California). Maine and Washington are in the final stages of publishing well-synchronized lists of this type. Clean Water Action strongly agrees with this goal of prioritizing and phasing out the most dangerous chemicals, particularly in children's products. If not the Department of Consumer Protection, we hope that one state agency, in consultation with the other relevant agencies, will take the lead on this important process so that it can move forward. Since Connecticut has access to other states' lists and the rationales and scientific evidence used by the toxicologists who produced them, our state agencies could easily move forward with selecting some of the most dangerous chemicals that are found in children's products.

House Bill 5314 would also phase out the highly neurotoxic and persistent metal cadmium from children's products. Cadmium is frequently found in PVC plastic children's toys (see list on next page) because it is added as a stabilizer. Cadmium is also often found in children's jewelry. Clean Water Action strongly supports taking fast action on cadmium because:

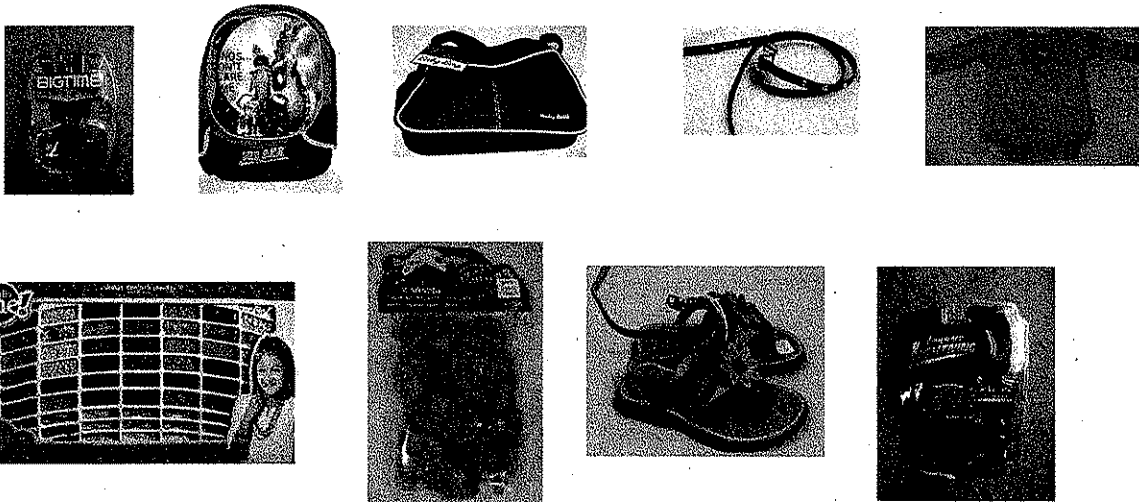
- Cadmium is classified as a **known human carcinogen** by the National Toxicology Program in the US, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, and the State of California (Proposition 65 in 1987)

- It is well-documented in animal studies that cadmium can impact child development by:
 - delaying sensory-motor skills development
 - changing hormone systems, and
 - altering behavior

It is because of these and other health concerns that Connecticut and 18 other states have passed legislation restricting cadmium in packaging materials, such as shopping bags and product wrappings. The European Union restricts cadmium in plastics, including PVC, and in electronic products such as toys. Washington State also limits the amount of cadmium allowable in children's products and components of such products.

While the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) that passed at the federal level in 2008 was a move in the right direction, it only addressed a narrow set of chemicals in a very limited set of products/product components. I believe this is why Connecticut is currently one of 10 states with proposed legislation designed specifically to restrict cadmium in children's products. The CPSIA directly addressed lead and phthalates for certain uses. We know there are many more uses for those chemicals (even among children's products), and then many more chemicals. The previously voluntary ASTM F963 standard was made mandatory in CPSIA, but this standard only regulates a handful of chemicals in surface coatings. For example, cadmium is now regulated in the coating or paint on a product under CPSIA because of the mandatory F963 standard, but not in children's jewelry and many other types of products that children can suck on or even swallow.

A few examples of children's products in which we have found high amounts of cadmium:
(testing performed in October and November of 2009)



For more details or product testing information, please see:

<http://www.healthystuff.org/departments/toys/>

Thank you very much for considering my testimony in support of House Bill 5314.

Sincerely,

Sarah Uhl

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